

Colby Library Quarterly



February 1947

SERIES ONE OF THE COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY

was published in the four-year period 1943 to 1946

in January, March, June, and October by the Colby College Library at Waterville, Maine, under the editorship of Carl J. Weber, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts. Subscription price: two dollars a year. Current single numbers: fifty cents. A printed INDEX to Series One will be supplied free upon request to any subscriber to this QUARTERLY.

Copies of all previous issues are still available. For convenience of reference, these issues may be identified as follows: in 1943, the Tennyson Jubilee issue appeared in January; the Newton Tercentenary number in March; the Henry James Centenary issue in June; and the Noah Webster Centenary, in October; in 1944, we observed the Henry C. Carey Sesquicentennial in January; a Kelmscott Press Jubilee in March; the Alexander Pope Bicentenary in June, and issued a "D-Day Number" in October; in 1945, our issues were devoted, in January to the fiftieth anniversary of Robert Louis Stevenson's death; in March, to Letters of William James; in June, to the Tenth Anniversary of the Colby Library Associates; and in October to the Swift Bicentenary; and in 1946, we observed, in January, the 50th Anniversary of *Jude the Obscure*; in March, the Jubilee of *A Shropshire Lad*; in June appeared our Smollett's *Ode* issue; and in October a William Morris Jubilee issue.

Beginning with the year 1947 this QUARTERLY will appear in February, May, August, and November — a timing which will correct the irregularities of our schedule during the first four years of our history. With this issue for February 1947 we begin Series II.

Communications regarding subscriptions should be addressed to the Librarian; communications regarding articles in the QUARTERLY should be addressed to Carl J. Weber.

Colby Library Quarterly

Series II

February 1947

Number 1

THE JUBILEE OF ROBINSON'S *TORRENT*

ON DECEMBER 6, 1946, the Colby Library Associates met in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *The Torrent and The Night Before* by Edwin Arlington Robinson. The Colby copies of this little blue book were on exhibition, and its Jubilee was marked by the announcement of the results of an attempt to compile at Colby a census of extant copies. In the course of the nation-wide investigation, new information about this momentous year in Robinson's life had been secured, and a brief outline of that information is here put on record, both for Library Associates who were unable to attend the December meeting and for students and friends of Robinson elsewhere.*

It has been learned that the poet began talking about "my book" as early as January 1895, when he declared that he would "have no trouble whatever" in getting it ready. He estimated that he could fill from 350 to 400 pages, with about 300 words on a page, and he had rosy visions of his verses finding "a duodecimo lodging between cloth covers." But by May of the same year he developed an uncomfortable feeling that he was not yet ready to publish and for more than eight months he laid the whole project aside. In February 1896, just when *A Shropshire Lad* by A. E. Housman was appearing in London, Robinson got to work on his "book" again, and shortly sent the manuscript off to a publisher. At this stage of his clouded prospect the pro-

* The editor gratefully acknowledges the assistance of scores of collaborators, whose friendly interest and disinterested help have made possible the results here presented.

jected book had shrunk to "something like a hundred pages" and bore the title *The Tavern and The Night Before*. Robinson at this time felt very well satisfied with the title, made up of the titles of two poems in the book.

In May 1896 the manuscript was returned, rejected. Robinson promptly tried a second publisher and was as promptly turned down again. He thereupon set about making definite plans to print the book at his own expense. He reduced the number of poems to forty-three, rejecting "The Tavern" entirely and promoting "The Torrent" to first place in the collection. He now realized that the book was not likely to be very imposing, but he felt pleased at the thought that he would at least see his verses in print. On September 12, 1896, he sent his "stuff," as he called the poems, off to The Riverside Press, at Cambridge, Massachusetts. There, in spite of the help that an uncle, Edward P. Fox, was able to give it, the book was side-tracked for weeks; and not until about the first of December, shortly after the poet's mother had died of diphtheria, did Robinson receive 312 copies of *The Torrent*, done up in packages which he was too deflated and bruised in spirit to care to open.

When he did eventually examine the contents of the packages, the unattractive blue covers, the small size of the pages, and the poor quality of the paper made him sick at heart. "I should like to kick them from here to Augusta," he declared, "and never see them again." Time, however, worked with its healing balm and by Friday, December 4, Robinson was ready to begin sending his book out into the world.

According to his own statement in *The Colophon* ("The First Seven Years," printed in December 1930), Robinson sent thirty or forty copies to friends and acquaintances, but most of the copies went "to periodicals . . . and to strangers." No attempt has heretofore been made to compile a list of the persons or the periodicals that received copies of *The Torrent and The Night Before*, and it is now

impossible to draw up more than a fragmentary list. Even so, the compilation serves to indicate with what thoroughness and skill Robinson went about his self-appointed task as publisher.

The list here given is made up of names which stand on three different kinds of foundation: (1) the solid rock of inscriptions found in copies still extant; (2) the prepared masonry of comments on *The Torrent* culled by Robinson from the thank-you letters that he received and quoted to other correspondents in letters now extant; and (3) the uncertain sand of memory or of mere probability, as indicated by the parenthetical question-marks in the list that follows. For ease of reference it is alphabetically arranged, not in the order in which Robinson sent the copies out.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Aldrich, Thomas Bailey | 29 Eliot, Charles W. |
| 2 Atwood, W. P. | 30 Fawcett, Edgar |
| 3 Baker, George P. | 31 Ford, J. S. |
| 4 <i>Bangor Commercial</i> | 32 Ford, J. S. (second copy) |
| 5 Barnard, L. M. | 33 Fox, E. P. |
| 6 Barstow, J. C. | 34 Gardiner, John Hays |
| 7 Blair, Arthur | 35 Gay, William R. |
| 8 <i>Boston Courier</i> | 36 Gilder, Richard W. |
| 9 Brett, George P. (?) | 37 Gledhill, Arthur R. |
| 10 Bridges, Robert | 38 Gosse, Edmund |
| 11 Briggs, L. B. R. | 39 Hardy, Thomas |
| 12 Brower, Miss Edith | 40 Hayes, J. J. |
| 13 Burnham, George | 41 Heath, Dr. G. E. |
| 14 Butler, William E. (?) | 42 <i>Independent</i> , New York |
| 15 Bynner, Witter (?) | 43 Insull, Samuel (later) |
| 16 Chamberlin, J. E. | 44 James, F. L. |
| 17 Chapman, H. L. | 45 Johnson, Henry |
| 18 Cheney, John Vance | 46 Jones (in Gardiner) |
| 19 <i>Chicago Record</i> | 47 Jordan, A. H. |
| 20 <i>Christian Register</i> | 48 La Rose, Pierre |
| 21 Clarke, Helen Archibald | 49 Larrabee, J. M. |
| 22 Coan, Titus M. | 50 Latham, G. W. |
| 23 <i>Critic</i> , New York | 51 Lee, G. S. |
| 24 <i>Denver Times</i> | 52 Library of Congress |
| 25 Dole, Nathan Haskell | 53 Library of Congress (second copy) |
| 26 Dunn, Robert Stead | 54 Lindsey, William |
| 27 Edwards, George Wharton | 55 <i>Literary World</i> , Boston |
| 28 Eggleston, Edward | |

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 56 Lounsbury, T. R. | 85 Robinson, H. Dean |
| 57 Marr, Carl (later) | 86 Saben, Mowry |
| 58 Marr, John W. | 87 Schumann, Dr. A. T. |
| 59 Martin, E. S. | 88 Scollard, Clinton |
| 60 Mitchell, S. Weir | 89 Scudder, H. E. |
| 61 Moody, William V. (?) | 90 Sherman, Frank D. |
| 62 Moore, Edward G. (?) | 91 Smith, Harry DeF. |
| 63 Mosher, Thomas B. | 92 Smith, H. D. (second copy) |
| 64 Moulton, Mrs. L. C. | 93 Smith, H. D. (third copy) |
| 65 <i>Musical Courier</i> | 94 Sprague copy (later) |
| 66 <i>Nation</i> | 95 Stedman, E. C. |
| 67 <i>New Orleans Picayune</i> | 96 Sumichrast, F. C. de (?) |
| 68 Norton, Charles Eliot | 97 Swan, Miss Caroline D. |
| 69 Oregon newspaper | 98 Swanton, Harry |
| 70 Palmer, Clara E. | 99 Swanton, John R. |
| 71 Palmer, George Herbert | 100 Swanton, Mrs. |
| 72 Payne, William M. | 101 Swinburne, A. C. |
| 73 Peck, Harry Thurston | 102 Tenney copy (later) |
| 74 Phelps, William Lyon | 103 Thorne, William H. |
| 75 <i>Philadelphia Press</i> | 104 <i>Time and the Hour</i> , Boston |
| 76 Pope, Seth E. (?) | 105 Traubel, H. L. |
| 77 Richards, Henry | 106 Trent, William P. |
| 78 Richards, Mrs. Laura E. | 107 Updike, B. |
| 79 Robbins, Linville (?) | 108 Vancouver paper |
| 80 Roberts, Charles G. D. | 109 Vannah, Kate (?) |
| 81 Robinson, Mrs. Emma | 110 Webster, H. S. |
| 82 Robinson, Miss Frances | 111 Wendell, Barrett |
| 83 Robinson, Fred N. | 112 Whitmore, Miss M. L. |
| 84 Robinson, Herman E. | |

If this list seems a mere fragment of the 312 names tabulated by the poet fifty years ago, we can only console ourselves with the thought that we are fortunate that the unknown part of the list does not total *more* than two hundred. A letter from Robinson dated 10 February 1898 (exhibited a few years ago in the Colby College Library) makes it clear that by the end of 1897 Robinson had no copy of *The Torrent* left in his own hands.

WE CAN do better than draw up a list of names. From the fact that the poet inscribed the copies as he sent them out, and the fact that, at least at the beginning of the

process of publication, he dated the inscriptions, we are able to reconstruct part of his calendar for December 1896. In the statements that follow, the reader must remember that the prefix "as far as our present information goes" is generally understood.

The first copy which the poet inscribed was "To George Burnham, from E. A. Robinson. 4 December, 1896." On this same Friday he inscribed a copy to J. S. Ford. The form used in inscribing these two copies was apparently followed by the poet on all the copies sent out to the thirty or forty friends and acquaintances: "To" with the friend's name; then simply "from E. A. Robinson" and the date. On copies sent to his cousin or given to his brothers, he did not spell his name out but wrote merely "from E.A.R." Robinson was fastidiously careful about his use of the preposition "to." When, later on, some person who had acquired a copy of *The Torrent*, asked him to write his name upon the title-page, Robinson would obligingly write (for instance): "For Mrs. Anne Smith from E. A. Robinson"; or "For Samuel Insull, Jr. / Edwin Arlington Robinson." No copy sent out in 1896 has the poet's name written out in full. In January 1897 the poet inscribed a copy for a friend whom he visited not far from the Colby College campus: "John W. Marr, from his friend, E. A. Robinson."

In inscribing copies to strangers, Robinson wrote (for example): "Thomas Hardy, with compliments of E. A. Robinson"; or "George Wharton Edwards with the compliments of E. A. Robinson." Sometimes he added the date; sometimes he did not. In one instance Robinson wrote: "Charles Eliot Norton, with compliments (and apologies) of E. A. Robinson."

Copies sent out to periodicals, or to the literary editors of newspapers, were inscribed merely "With compliments of E. A. Robinson"; no date. There is, therefore, usually no way of telling to *what* periodical an extant copy of *The Torrent* may have been sent fifty years ago; but in some in-

stances the arrival of the book and its subsequent review in the periodical led to correspondence between the poet and his reviewer; and if the reviewer later attached Robinson's letter to the copy of *The Torrent* which he had received, he thereby supplied an identification mark. The Literary Editor of *The Independent*, for instance, wrote to Robinson to ask which poems in the book were the earliest composed. Robinson's answer supplies information which is possibly not available anywhere else. The earliest compositions in *The Torrent* were, Robinson stated, "perhaps Ballade of a Ship, Villanelle of Change, or some of the Sonnets."

Robinson was apparently in no great rush to send out his 312 copies in huge lots. At the rate of five or six copies a day, the process of distribution may have been spread over several months. On Monday, December 7, he sent two copies to the Library of Congress and inscribed copies to his friends Harry Deforest Smith and G. W. Latham and to his uncle E. P. Fox. On Wednesday the ninth, he addressed copies to William Lyon Phelps, to E. C. Steadman, to Miss Caroline D. Swan (who had taught Robinson when he was a boy), and to his cousin Frances Robinson. The record of the remaining days of the same week shows the pace at which Robinson worked. On the tenth (Thursday), copies were inscribed to G. W. Edwards, G. E. Heath, G. S. Lee, T. B. Mosher, C. E. Norton, and Fred N. Robinson. On the eleventh, to F. L. James, P. La Rose, Mrs. Richards, B. Updike, and H. S. Webster. On the twelfth, to Charles W. Eliot, George Herbert Palmer, Clinton Scollard, A. C. Swinburne, and H. L. Traubel. On Wednesday the sixteenth, Robinson got around to inscribing copies for his two brothers, Herman and Dean. After that, he seems to have discontinued the practice of *dating* the inscriptions, though there are a few in existence dated in 1897: for example, copies inscribed to W. P. Atwood, Edith Brower, and John Marr.

HOW many of the original 312 copies of *The Torrent* have survived? In 1930 Robinson answered this question in *The Colophon*: "I have no means of knowing how many copies . . . are now in existence. Considering the few that have come up for sale [less than a score have appeared in auction-sales in the last twenty-five years], perhaps it may be safe to assume that of the original three hundred, something like half that number may have been lost or destroyed."

The investigations of the present reporter lead him to believe that many more than "half that number" have been "lost or destroyed." Of the 112 copies the recipients of which are listed on a preceding page, only 56—exactly half—are now known to be in existence. These are fairly evenly divided between libraries (public, college, or university) and private owners. The following census of extant copies is probably not complete, but it is as accurate and full as diligent efforts have permitted.

1. "Thomas Bailey Aldrich, with compliments of E. A. Robinson. 13 December, 1896." Now in the library of Harvard University.
2. "W. P. Atwood from E. A. Robinson. 1897." At the top of page 7 Robinson added the words of a missing line: *But they danced and they drank and their souls grew gay*. Willis Atwood was a classmate of the poet in the Gardiner High School. This copy is now in the possession of Mr. Howard G. Schmitt.
3. Mr. Leonard M. Barnard, civil engineer in Gardiner, Maine, still has the copy which Robinson gave him fifty years ago, but cover and title-page (with its inscription) have been lost.
4. "R. Bridges, with compliments of E. A. Robinson." This inscription is copied from the facsimile printed in *The Colophon* in December 1930. Some good judges believe that this copy was sent to the English poet, but Robinson, writing to Howard G. Schmitt on November 1, 1931, declared: "He is Robert Bridges of *Scribner's*, by the way—not the late poet-laureate." The present whereabouts of this copy is not known, and it should, strictly speaking, not be included in this list.
5. "To [name inked out] with compliments of E. A. Robinson. 16 December, 1896. [Later:] To Miss Brower. Jan. 1897." Now in the Colby College Library.

8 Colby Library Quarterly

6. "To George Burnham from E. A. Robinson. 4 December, 1896." No earlier inscription is known. Now in the Colby College Library.

7. "J. E. Chamberlin, with compliments of E. A. Robinson." This inscription is not dated, but it was sent to the *Boston Evening Transcript* prior to December 22, 1896. Now in the Dartmouth College Library.

8. "George Wharton Edwards with the compliments of E. A. Robinson. 10 December 1896." Later owned by Herman L. R. Edgar; now in the Harvard University Library.

9. "C. W. Eliot, with compliments of E. A. Robinson 12 December 1896." President Eliot's copy is now in the Harvard University Library.

10. "To J. S. Ford, from E. A. Robinson. 4 December, 1896." Now in the Abernethy Library, Middlebury College.

11. A second copy, once owned by J. S. Ford, a teacher at Phillips Exeter Academy, has no inscription. It is now in the library of Mr. H. B. Collamore.

12. "E. P. Fox From E. A. Robinson 7 December, 1896." Edward Proby Fox, an uncle by marriage on Robinson's father's side of the family, was employed at the Riverside Press. His copy, once owned by Mr. John T. Snyder, is now in the Williams College Library.

13. "R. W. Gilder with compliments of E. A. Robinson"; no date. Once owned by Frank I. Fletcher, it is now in the library of Mr. Allan Hyman.

14. "Thomas Hardy, with compliments of E. A. Robinson. 15 December, 1896." Once owned by Robert J. Hamerschlag, this copy is now in the possession of Mr. Howard G. Schmitt.

15. "Dr. G. E. Heath, from E. A. Robinson, 10 December, 1896." Dr. Gertrude Heath's copy later changed hands, and the poet inscribed it a second time: "For Mrs. Anne Smith from E. A. Robinson. April 8, 1924." He also wrote in and initialed the line missing at the top of page 7 [see copy No. 2 above]. Now owned by Dr. and Mrs. Walter W. Boyd.

16. "With compliments of E. A. Robinson." This copy, originally sent to *The Independent*, was later owned by Ida O. Folsom. After its auction-sale in 1932, the poet again held the book in his hands and on the title-page wrote: "Line inserted on page 7. E. A. Robinson. July 29, 1933." And at the top of page 7 he wrote out the missing line. This copy is now in the possession of Mr. Charles C. Auchincloss.

17. "For Samuel Insull, Jr. Edwin Arlington Robinson." Apparently inscribed for Mr. Insull and not presented to him by the poet. Later owned by Mrs. George Martin. Sold at auction in 1937 and again in January 1947, this copy is now owned by Mr. Howard W. Johnson.

18. "Dr. F. L. James, with compliments of E. A. Robinson, 11 December 1896." Now in the library of Mr. Parkman D. Howe.
19. "H. Johnson, with compliments of E. A. Robinson." Henry Johnson was Longfellow Professor of Modern Languages at Bowdoin College. His copy is now in the Bowdoin Library.
20. "P. la Rose, with compliments of E. A. Robinson. 11 December, 1896." Pierre la Rose was a well-known figure at Harvard fifty years ago. His copy of *The Torrent* is now in the library of The University of Buffalo.
21. "J. M. Larrabee, with compliments of E. A. Robinson. 16 December, 1896." Judge Larrabee presided over the Municipal Court in Gardiner. His copy of *The Torrent* is now in the Huntington Library, California.
22. "G. W. Latham, from E. A. Robinson 7 December, 1896." Now in the Chapin Library at Williams College.
23. "G. S. Lee with compliments of E. A. Robinson 10 December 1896." Now owned by the Reverend Dr. Bruce Swift.
24. Uninscribed copy deposited Monday, December 7, 1896, in the Library of Congress. Two copies were filed but only one was "processed" and the disposition of the second copy is not now known.
25. "T. R. Lounsbury, with compliments of E. A. Robinson." Professor Lounsbury's copy is now in the Yale University Library.
26. "With the compliments of E. A. Robinson." Acquired in April 1921 by Mr. Carl Marr of Waterville, Maine, this copy is now in the possession of James F. Drake, Inc., New York City.
27. "John W. Marr, from his friend, E. A. Robinson, Jan. 1897." This copy later came back into Robinson's hands and received a second inscription: "Louis V. Ledoux, from E.A.R., 1921." The missing line was supplied on page 7 in the poet's autograph. This copy was later owned by Mrs. M. E. Getz, later by H. Bertram Smith, and is now in the hands of an owner whom we have been unable to trace.
28. "E. S. Martin, with compliments of E. A. Robinson." Now in the Public Library of Gardiner, Maine.
29. "Thomas B. Mosher, with compliments of E. A. Robinson, 10 December, 1896." Now owned by Mr. C. W. Coventry.
30. "Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton, with compliments of E. A. Robinson. 16 December, 1896." Now in the Boston Public Library.
31. "Charles Eliot Norton, with compliments (and apologies) of E. A. Robinson 10 December 1896." Now in the Harvard University Library.
32. "Clara E. Palmer, from E. A. Robinson, 16 December, 1896." Now in the library of Mr. J. K. Lilly, Jr.

33. "G. H. Palmer, with compliments of E. A. Robinson 12 December, 1896." Now in the Wellesley College Library.
34. "W. L. Phelps with compliments of E. A. Robinson 9 December, 1896." Now in the Yale University Library.
35. "H. H. Richards, from E. A. Robinson 8 December 1896." Mr. Henry Richards, of the Groton School, still has this copy.
36. "Mrs. L. E. Richards With compliments of E. A. Robinson 11 December 1896." Now in the library of Miss Rosalind Richards.
37. "To Frances Robinson from E.A.R. 9 December, 1896." Now in the possession of Miss Annette Cummings.
38. Fred N. Robinson still has the copy which the poet inscribed to him on December 10, 1896.
39. "H. E. Robinson from E.A.R. 16 December, 1896." Now in the Colby College Library. Herman Robinson was the younger of the poet's two older brothers.
40. "H. D. Robinson from E.A.R. 16 December, 1896." Now in the Colby College Library. Horace Dean Robinson was the oldest of the three brothers.
41. "Clinton Scollard, with compliments of E. A. Robinson. 12 December 1896." Now owned by James F. Drake, Inc., New York City.
42. "H. E. Scudder with compliments of E. A. Robinson." This is, presumably, the copy sent to *The Atlantic Monthly*. Later owned by Paul Lemperly, it is now in the possession of Mr. Arthur Rosenbloom.
43. "H. Deforest Smith from E. A. Robinson 7 December 1896." Now in the possession of Mrs. H. D. Smith.
44. "With compliments of E. A. Robinson." Once owned by Frank Brewer Bemis, this copy is now in the possession of Mrs. Frank J. Sprague.
45. "Edmund Clarence Stedman, with compliments of E. A. Robinson. 9 December, 1896." Formerly owned by Wilbur Macey Stone, later by E. L. DeGolyer, this copy is now in the library of The University of Texas.
46. "For Miss Swan, From E. A. Robinson. 9 December, 1896." Now owned by Miss Ellen-Jane Lyon.
47. "A. C. Swinburne, with compliments of E. A. Robinson 12 December, 1896." After Swinburne's death, this copy was acquired by Arthur Spingarn and by him returned to the poet, who thereupon inscribed it "To L. M. Isaacs from E. A. Robinson May, 1921." Now in the possession of Mrs. Lewis M. Isaacs.
48. A copy is now owned by Mr. Daniel G. Tenney, Jr.; details about it are not now available.
49. "H. L. Traubel, with compliments of E. A. Robinson 12 Decem-

ber, 1896." This copy, sent to *The Conservator* of Camden, New Jersey, is now in the library of Mr. C. Beecher Hogan.

50. "B. Updike From E. A. Robinson, 11 December, 1896." Now owned by Mrs. Emory L. Ferris.

51. "H. S. Webster, From E. A. Robinson. 11 December, 1896." Now in the Maine State Library at Augusta.

52. "Miss M. L. Whitmore With the compliments of E. A. Robinson." Miss Lillian Whitmore was a friend of the poet's mother. Her copy of *The Torrent* is now in the possession of Miss Alice Frost Lord.

53. "With compliments of E. A. Robinson." Now in the Amherst College Library.

54. "With compliments of E. A. Robinson." The poet later inserted the missing line at the top of page 7. Now in the library of Mr. H. B. Collamore.

55. "With compliments of E. A. Robinson." Now in the Grosvenor Library, Buffalo, New York.

56. An unscribed copy, formerly owned by Mrs. Herman Robinson, is now in the Colby College Library.

To summarize this tabulation of extant copies: there are—

- 30 copies in private hands
- 5 copies in the Colby College Library
- 4 copies in the Harvard University Library
- 2 copies at Williams College, one in the college library and one in the Chapin Library
- 2 copies in the Yale University Library
- 1 copy in the Amherst College Library
- 1 copy in the Boston Public Library
- 1 copy in the Bowdoin College Library
- 1 copy in the University of Buffalo Library
- 1 copy in the Dartmouth College Library
- 1 copy in the Gardiner Public Library
- 1 copy in the Grosvenor Library
- 1 copy in the Huntington Library
- 1 copy in the Library of Congress
- 1 copy in the Maine State Library
- 1 copy in the Middlebury College Library
- 1 copy in the University of Texas Library
- 1 copy in the Wellesley College Library

56 copies

Only five of the twenty-six copies now located in public or institutional libraries are outside of New England.

"Some day," Robinson is said to have remarked as he gave a copy of *The Torrent* to his schoolmate Will Gay, "some day that's going to be worth something." The passage of half a century has proved Robinson right.



A NEW POEM BY EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

IN assembling the forty-three poems which he printed in *The Torrent* and *The Night Before*, Robinson put in the twenty-seventh place a series of eight-line stanzas entitled "For Calderon." Apparently the poet came to believe that the publication of this poem had been a mistake, for a year later, when he reprinted most of *The Torrent* in *The Children of the Night*, he suppressed "For Calderon" and he never thereafter revived it.

In place of "For Calderon" and the similarly suppressed "Poem for Max Nordau" (No. 41 in *The Torrent*), Robinson printed sixteen new poems in *The Children of the Night* in 1897. The most persistently followed form in this group was one that Robinson called simply "octave." No. 16 in *The Children* was "Two Octaves" and No. 53 was entitled merely "Octaves," a group of twenty-five of them. This total of twenty-seven octaves does not, however, exhaust the list of Robinson's work in this metrical form. For he wrote at least one more which seems never to have achieved print. He wrote it out and sent it to Miss Edith Brower, of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. She pasted this Octave into her copy of *The Torrent*, one that Robinson sent her in January 1897. This copy—presented to Colby College by Mr. H. B. Collamore, a member of its Board of Trustees—was the copy that attracted most attention when it was placed on exhibition in the Treasure Room last December.

Robinson had been called a "pessimist" by one of the reviewers of *The Torrent*. To the Literary Editor of *The*

Independent the poet wrote on December 19, 1896: "I wish you would read *The Torrent*, *The Children of the Night*, and *Two Sonnets*, and then ask yourself if I am a pessimist." Miss Brower seems to have written Robinson, denouncing the critic who was so blind as to call the poet a pessimist; he was no pessimist; he was an idealist. In reply Robinson wrote:

IDEALIST?—Oh yes, or what you will,
 I do not wrangle any more with names—
 I only want the Truth. Give me the Truth,
 And let the system go; give me the Truth,
 And I stand satisfied. Fame, glory, gold,—
 Take these, and keep them. They were never mine—
 I do not ask for them. I only ask
 That I, and you, and you, may get the Truth!

E. A. R.

With the kind permission of the poet's niece, Mrs. William Nivison, the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY here has the honor of being the first to print this interesting Octave,—preserved all these years for us in Miss Brower's copy of *The Torrent*. Members of the Colby Library Associates and subscribers to this QUARTERLY thus acquire a genuine Robinson first edition!



RECENT GIFTS TO THE COLBY LIBRARY

FROM Miss Olive Floyd, of South Lincoln, Massachusetts, we have received two splendid letters written by Sarah Orne Jewett to Miss Floyd's father, the late Andress Small Floyd of Union, New Jersey. The letters from Miss Jewett were written in November 1894.

From Mr. George S. Chappell, author of the amusing *Rollo in Society* (New York, 1922), we have received a five-volume set of Jacob Abbott's Little Rollo books, published in 1853 by B. F. Jackson in Philadelphia. This is the first

set by this publisher to be added to the growing Abbott Collection at Colby.

From Mrs. Maurice J. Kane, of Center Lovell, Maine, we have received a mint copy of the Commencement Week program of Vassar College, June 1917, containing Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Baccalaureate Hymn" which begins: "Thou great offended God of love." This Millay "first edition" has, in the course of thirty years, become an extremely rare item.

Mrs. Peter Vasilieff, of New York City, has given us a copy of *Yaddo Yesterday and Today* by Marjorie P. Waite, a beautiful book produced by the Argus Press in 1934.

From Lillian Fellows (Mrs. Edward) Spangler we have received a valuable record of Winterport, Maine, entitled *An Old River Town* (New York, 1907).

Our alumni have continued their interest and their help. David Libbey, '39, has given us a copy of Henry W. Nevins's book on Thomas Hardy and a Belgian edition of the French translation (by Georges A. Benett) of Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge*. Edgar P. Neal, '93, has sent us a copy of Homer's *Iliad* in Greek, with Latin notes by Samuel Clarke, published in London in 1760. From Mrs. Arthur H. Berry we have received a first edition of Zona Gale's *Bridal Pond*.

David A. Randall, of New York City, has enriched our Hardy Collection by the gift of twenty-two volumes, ten published in New York and a dozen in Leipzig, Germany. All twenty-two are in protective slip-cases. Mr. Neil Leonard, '21, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the college, has given us a copy of the first American edition of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*.

Another member of the Board of Trustees, Mr. H. B. Collamore, of Hartford, Connecticut, has given his entire Henry James Collection to the Colby Library. This is a gift of such magnitude and importance as to require detailed analysis and report later. All that we do here is to announce the gift and to invite our readers to rejoice with

us that the Colby James Collection can now, by reason of this immense boost, take rank with the best collections of Henry James to be found anywhere.

Shortly before Christmas (1946) the library's collection of Christmas printings was splendidly enriched by a gift from Mr. Philo C. Calhoun, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, consisting of a five-volume set of Charles Dickens's Christmas stories in first editions. The set includes a copy of the much-prized *Christmas Carol*, the centenary of which we observed in 1943, but without possessing at that time a copy of the first edition. Mr. Calhoun's gift-books are nicely boxed in a green morocco case.

From Professor William A. Jackson, of Harvard University, we have received an attractive set of eight first editions of books by Poet Laureate John Masefield.

From Mr. Nathan N. Wallack of Washington, D. C., we have received a tastefully bound memorial volume containing a collection of original autograph letters by a variety of authors, testifying to their interest in and appreciation of the literary work of Mrs. Margaret Deland. Mr. Wallack had originally collected these letters and had them bound into this volume, which he presented to Mrs. Deland. After her death, the book was returned to Mr. Wallack, whereupon he presented it to the Colby College Library. He has now added to this original gift two others: the galley-proofs of the first edition of Mrs. Deland's *The Kays* (New York, 1926), with numerous corrections and revisions, typed or in Mrs. Deland's autograph; and a collection of twenty-five letters from twenty-five authors, commenting on Mrs. Deland and her literary work. Mr. Wallack has signified his intention of making further contributions to the Deland corner of our Maine Authors Alcove.

For two weeks prior to last Thanksgiving Day, the Fifty Books of the Year (the 1946 list) were exhibited in the temporary Treasure Room. There they were inspected by many members of the college. For two weeks prior to that

16 Colby Library Quarterly

exhibition, we had on display Fifty Books of the Press,—the Press being The Southworth-Anthoensen Press of Portland. The exhibition of these products of the most famous printing-office in Maine was opened at a meeting of the Colby Library Associates which Mr. Fred Anthoensen and Mr. John Marchi of the Press attended. The occasion was made additionally memorable by Mr. Anthoensen's presentation of two sumptuous volumes of which his Press is justifiably proud. *Early American Children's Books* by A. S. W. Rosenbach has been described by Mr. Anthoensen as "one of the best books ever printed by the Press"; the copy presented to the Colby Library is printed on Zerkall Halle paper, with a rubricated title-page and a hundred illustrations, many of them colored by hand. The book was bound in blue pigskin by the Harcourt Bindery of Boston, and stamped in blind and gold from designs by W. A. Dwiggins, designer of the Colby College seal. This book was deservedly one of the Fifty Books of the Year 1933.

The second volume given to the library by Mr. Anthoensen is *Early American Rooms*, edited by Russell H. Kettell. This book, as Mr. Anthoensen stated, "more typographical problems than any book previously printed by the Press," and everyone who has examined the volume has exclaimed with delight at Mr. Anthoensen's solution of these problems. The title-page he "esteems as among the best he has done," and of the illustrations by Max Jaffé in Vienna Mr. Anthoensen conservatively remarked: "It is doubtful whether the twelve color-collotype plates printed by Jaffé have been excelled technically." It is easy to understand why this was one of the Fifty Books of the Year 1937.

The Housman Collection has been enriched by Mrs. Clarence H. White, who presented a London 1930 edition of *A Shropshire Lad*, and by Mr. Henry H. Franklin, of Portland, who has given us a variant binding of the 1932 Three Sirens Press edition of the famous poems.

COLBY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

THIS ORGANIZATION was founded in April, 1935. Its object is to increase the resources of the Colby College Library by securing gifts and by providing funds for the purchase of books, manuscripts, and other material which the Library could not otherwise acquire.

MEMBERSHIP is open to anyone paying an annual subscription of five dollars or more (undergraduates pay fifty cents, and graduates of the college pay one dollar annually during the first five years out of college), or an equivalent gift of books (or other material) needed by the Library. Such books must be given specifically through the ASSOCIATES. The fiscal year of the ASSOCIATES runs from July 1 to June 30. Members are invited to renew their memberships without special reminder at any date after July 1. Naturally, if money comes in early in the year, it helps the purchasing committee to make its plans.

Members will receive copies of the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY and notification of the meetings of the society. The officers for 1946-1947 are:

President, Frederick A. Pottle, Yale University.

Vice-President, Wilbert L. Carr.

Secretary, Gilmore Warner, Librarian.

Treasurer, Norman D. Palmer.

Committee on Book Purchases: Luella F. Norwood (term expires in 1947), Walter N. Breckenridge (term expires in 1948), and (*ex officio*) the Vice-President and the Secretary.

Editor of the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY and chairman of the Committee on Exhibitions and Programs: Carl J. Weber.

This issue of the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY has been set up
and printed by The Anthoensen Press in Portland, Maine.

Series II

February 1947

No. 1
